NEW ADDRESS: Rt.7, Frederick, Md., 21701
301/473-8186

February 20, 1968

Mr. Arthur A. Cohen
Vice-President and Executive Editor
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
383 Madison Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Cohen,

Your cover advertisement in the January 29 issue of Publishers' Weekly is a model of modesty such as one does not expect from publishers. In your humble commentary on "A Citizen's Dissent" you fail to claim f or Mark Lane what is as much his due as those noble accomplishments you do attribute to him.

How could you possibly forget that it is he who discovered America, invented the wheel, tamed the wild forces of nature in harnessing electricity and bridling the atom?

You are, of course, right, as you know, in not claiming invention of the printing press for him, for Holt, Rinehart did that, did they not?

What Mark Lane did "alone" is worthy of noting. He is the single American lawyer (by no means the only person) who said of the early mishandling of the investigation that it was wrong and he opposed it. For this he deserves to be honored and remembered.

And what Holt, Rinehart did is the major contribution of the marriage. With just the right blend of unscrupulousness and aggressiveness you launched a very successful public-relations campaign, enough to make a success of any book, even one less worthy.

But without you and without Lane the same thing would have happened, perhaps more successfully, for the error of the work provided a ready target for retaliation from which other works suffered.

It is not demeaning to Mark to say what is true: that he did not and could not do his own work, his own writing. The history of the revisions of the book does not defame it, for that is the history of other books, even if few have that much and that high-powered attention lavished upon them (or need it). It is not degrading to him to say that his work is erroneous where it needn't have been, for that was the official design (although one might have hoped that with all the auxiliary talent more might have been avoided.

What is despicable is the falsehood without which you seem unable to market what bears his name, the false claims that needlessly hurt others, particularly those who did the work for which your wealth alone awards him credit. Once I asked you if there were not enough that you could honestly attribute to him. This ad is eloquent answer.

The unfortunate fact is that there is no major contribution to the revelation of either the evidence or the suppressed fact of the assassination for which Mark is responsible, and of those doing genuine, original work in the field, which is your claim, here is he is close to "alone".

He is also "alone" among those of us doing the work in having had the considerable manpower and financial support of other concerned citizens.

He is "alone" in having spent time at the Archives and dredged nothing of real value from that literary quicksand except the misinterpretation of

that file so basic to the Garrison investigation. Your book declares wrong what Garrison now proclaims right. With modesty almost the equal of yours, Mark announced in Europe he was going to give all he had about the New Orleans part of the case - actually less than nothing, for it was in error where he had anything - to Garrison. Aside from his cavalier dismissal of the essential File 1553, what was Mark going to give Garrison, his "evidence" that Clay Bertrand was an "attorney"? (p.390)

While he is not alone in having taken the work of others, without permission or credit, he was the first. One can understand your reluctance in noting this among his solitary achievements.

With his history of having so totally avoided the New Orleans end of the assassination story, except for a brush with error, he is also "alone" in being the one working in the field to take credit for it when it wasn't his, and then to have gone to New Orleans and laid the basis for the acquittal of the defendant.

I find it interesting that you allege that "the U.S. government and the communications industry attempted to suppress his investigation (your word) of the Kennedy assassination ..." Mark spent so little time in government files that total success at "suppression" would have cost him little (here, too, he is "alone", for almost everyone who spent any time there at all discovered something of value). There is no reason to believe that he suffered any governmental suppression, unlike others, who really did the work you attribute to him.

If the communications industry attempted to "suppress" him, what of the others of us? Thanks to you, he got more time than everyone else together. Suppression, Mr. Cohen? Real indictments can honestly be leveled against all the media, but not by you and not on behalf of Mark. In his relations with them, he distinguished himself as he alone could bring himself to do. Remember those thousands of footnotes, the number of which you together so skilfully elevated by repetition, like the first one ten times? Remember how competently you advertised them? Well, in all those thousands of footnotes, the one citing the one paper that gave him voice is missing. Could this be because it is a "leftist" paper?

Thanks to you, Mark is now a wealthy man. He should be. And he should enjoy his wealth. He has earned it. However, and this is consistent with his footnote omission, he is reluctant to pay the price one would expect of the man you so boldly and expensively advertise. You and I, Mr. Cohen, have risked more than wealth (I cannot, for I do not have it), to genuinely oppose the government. If nowhere else, we are together in the Writers and Editors protest. Again "alone", Mark is missing. If it is on principle, how can you justify your ad? If it is not, how dare you publish it?

Aside from his wretched ethics, his totality of unscrupulousness, there is one way in which Mark is absolutely alone: he is the one with a major book who was not alone in its researching, writing, editing or publishing. With what I have observed of your company on this subject - and we have had enough previous correspondence to justify the belief that there we understand each other - this is enough to warrant the wording of the ad.

Contemptuously yours,

Harold Weisberg